A moſt notable Example of an Ungracious Son,

who in pride of his heart denyed his own Father, and how God for his offence turned his meat into loathſom Toads, To the Tune of, Lord Derby.

IN ſearching famous Chronicles,
it was my change to read,
A worthy ſtory ſtrange and true,
whereto I took Good heed;
Betwixt a Father and a Son
this rare example ſtands,
Which well may move the hardeſt hearts
to weep and wring their hands.
A Farmer in the Country liv'd
whoſe ſubſtance did excel,
Ye ſent therefore his eldeſt Son
in Paris for to dwell:
Where he became a Merchant man,
and Traffique Great he uſed,
So that he was exceeding rich
till he himſelf abuſed.
For having now the world at will
his mind was fully bent,
To Gaming, wine, and wantonneſs,
till all his Goods were ſpent.
Yet ſuch exceſſive rioteuſneſs,
by him was ſhewed forth,
That he was three times more in debt
than all his Wealth was worth.
At length his credit clean was crackt,
and he in priſon caſt,
And every man againſt him then,
did ſet his action faſt:
Then he lay lockt in Irons ſtrong
for ever and for aye,
Unable while his life did laſt
this grievous debt to pay.
And living in this woful caſe,
his eyes with tears he ſpent.
The lewdneſs of his former life
too late he did repent:
And being void of all relief,
of help and comfort quite,
Unto his Father at the laſt,
he thus began to write.
Bow down a while your heedful ear,
my loving father dear,
And grant I pray in gracious ſort,
my piteous plaint to hear:
Forgive the foul offences all
of your unworthy Son,
Which through the lewdneſs of his life
hath now himſelf undone.
O my good father take remorſe,
on this my extream need,
And ſuccour his diſtreſſed ſtate
whoſe heart for woe doth bleed,
In direful dungeon here I lye,
my feet in fetters faſt,
Where my moſt cruel Creditors,
in priſon have me caſt.
Let pity therefore pierce your breaſt
and mercy move your mind,
And to releaſe my miſery
ſome ſhift dear father find,
My chiefeſt Chear is bread full brown
the boards my ſofteſt bed,
And flinty ſtones my pillow ſerve
to reſt my troubled head.

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My Garments all are worn to rags,
my body ſtarves with cold,
And creeping vermine eat my fleſh,
moſt grievous to behold:
Dear father come therefore with ſpeed,
and rid me out of thrall,
And let me not in priſon dye,
ſith for your help I call.
The Good old man no ſooner had
perus'd this written ſcrowl,
But trickling tears along his cheeks
moſt plentiouſly did rowl.
Alas my ſon, my ſon quoth he,
in whom I joyed moſt,
Thou ſhalt not long in priſon be,
what ever it me coſt.
Two hundred head of well-fed beaſts
he changed into Gold,
Four hundred quarters of Good corn,
for ſilver eke he ſold,
But all the ſame could not ſuffice
this hanious fact to pay,
Till at the laſt conſtrained was
to ſell his Land away.
Then was his Son releaſed quite,
his debts diſcharged clean,
And he like as well to Live,
as he before had bèn.
Then went his Loving Father home
who for to help his Son
Had ſold his Living quite away,
and eke himſelf undone.
So that he Lived poor and bare
and in ſuch extream need,
That many times he wanted food
his hungry corps to feed.

His ſon mean time in wealth did ſwim,
whoſe ſubſtance now was ſuch,
That ſure within the City then
few men were found ſo rich.
But as his Goods did ſtill increaſe,
and Riches it did ſlide,
So more and more his hardned heart
did ſwell in hateful pride.
But it fell out upon a time,
when ten years woe was paſt,
Unto his Son he did repair
for ſome relief at laſt.
And being come unto his houſe
in very poor array,
It chanced ſo that with his Son
great ſtore ſhould dine that day:
The poor old man with hat in hand,
did then the Porter pray,
To ſhew his ſon that at the Gate
his Father there did ſtay.
Whereat this proud diſdainful wretch
with taunting ſpeeches ſaid,
That long ago his Fathers bones
within the Grave was laid.
What Raſcal then is that quoth he,
that ſaineth thus my ſtate:
I charge thée Porter preſently
to drive him from my Gate.
Which anſwer when the old man heard
he was in mind diſmaid,
He wept, he wail'd, he wrung his hands,
and thus at length he ſaid,
O curſed wretch, and moſt unkind,
and worker of my woe,
Thou monſter of humanity,
and eke thy fathers foe.

Have I been careful of thy caſe,
maintaining ſtill thy ſtate,
And doſt thou now moſt doggedly
enforce me from thy Gate:
And have I wrong'd thy brethren all,
from thrall to ſet thee free,
And brought my ſelf to beggars ſtate,
and all to ſuccour thée.
Woe worth the time that firſt of all
thy body I eſpy'd,
Which hath in hardneſs of thy heart
thy fathers face deny'd.
But now behold how God that time
did ſhew a wonder Great,
Even when his ſon and all his friends,
were ſetting down to meat.
For when the faireſt pye was cut
a ſtrange and dreadful caſe,
Moſt ugly Toads came crawling out
and leaped in his face:
Then did this wretch his fault confeſs,
and for his father ſent,
And for his Great ingratitude
full ſore he did repent.
All vertuous Children Learn by this
obedient hearts to ſhow,
And honour ſtil your parents dear,
for God commanded ſo:
And think how he did turn his meat
to poyſonous Toads indéed,
Which did his fathers face deny
becauſe he ſtood in néed.

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